

MAGAZINE

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The Indians of Northeast Oklahoma



Oklahoma has one of the largest Indian populations in the United States. The eight tribes in the northeast corner of the state, representative of the numerous tribes across the nation, range in membership from 160 to more than 2,400.

Few full-blood Indians remain. The Quapaw tribe, for example, claims only three among its 1,920 members. And no one can speak the original Quapaw language. Yet, preserving tribal values and customs is of importance to every tribe. The Ottawa chief, concerned with perpetuation, spent nine years preparing a dictionary of the tribe's language. Other traditions have been lost by the Indians trying to keep up with the fast-moving society of which they are now full-fledged members.

The eight tribes of northeast Oklahoma all work together. A member of the Seneca-Cayuga tribe serves as business manager for the Miamis. When attending Indian meetings, the Modoc chief looks out for all the tribes in the area. The Seneca-Cayuga Health Clinic serves up to 75 different tribes throughout the United States. And the (Continued on page 2)

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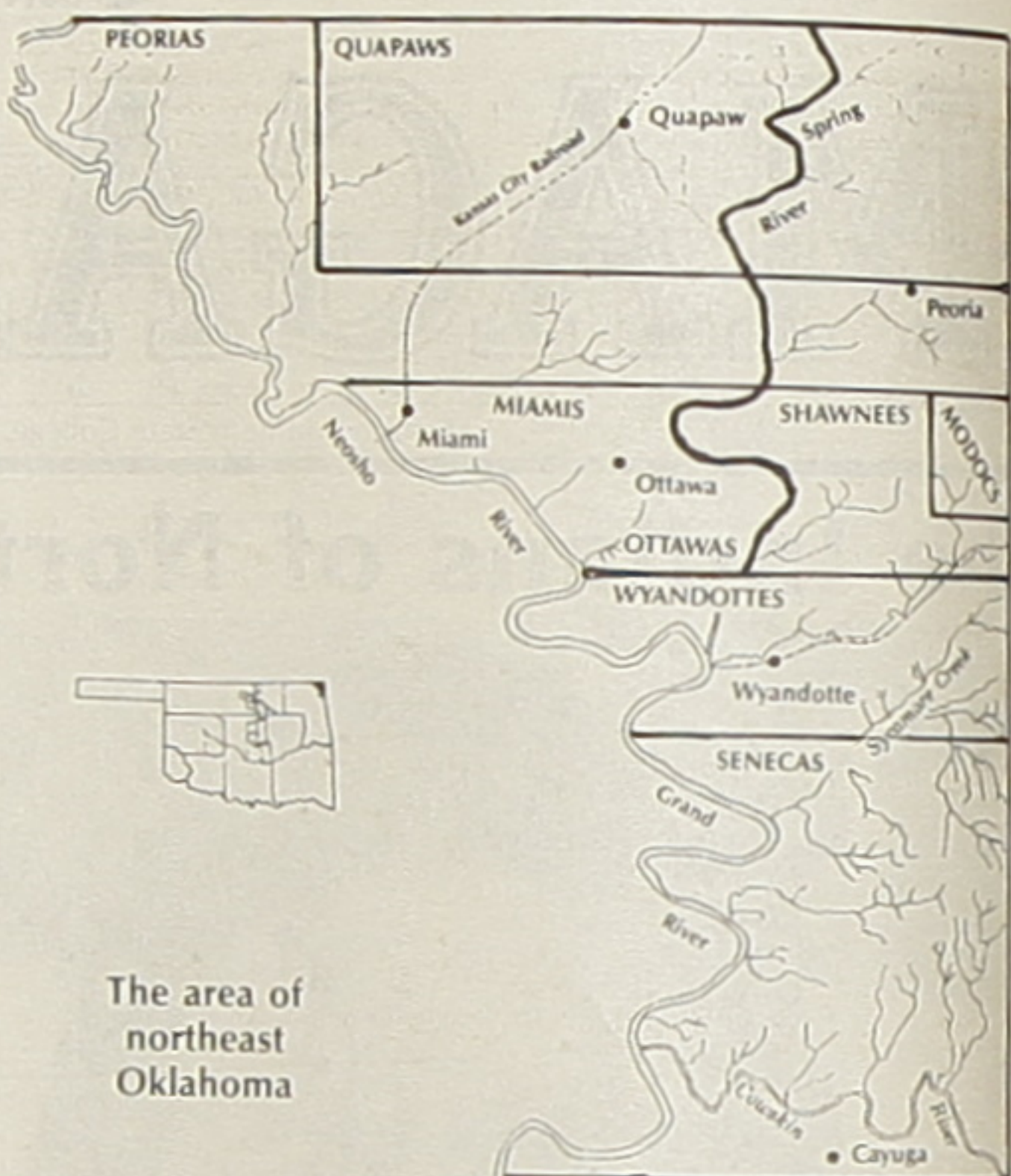
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annual Quapaw Pow-wow provided the opportunity for 125 tribes to share song and dance.

A main concern of the eight tribes is the economic development of northeast Oklahoma. The 1986 closing of the B.F. Goodrich plant in Miami took away hundreds of jobs and severely crippled the area economy. The Wyandotte tribe would like to build a major theme park in the area. The Seneca-Cayugas are considering an \$800,000 investment—the purchase of the Elk River Resort, located north of Grove. The Quapaw tribe is working on adding a convenience store and hotel.

Of course, bingo operations provide an important source of income for a few of the tribes. The Seneca-Cayugas, which opened a bingo hall on tribal property in 1982, average 430 participants per night. The players come from Missouri, Kansas, and Arkansas as well as Oklahoma. The Quapaw tribe also operates a profitable bingo hall.

Many Indian families, however, exist on poverty-level incomes. Persons proving they are of Indian descent receive a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) card, which makes them eligible to receive various benefits. These benefits include housing

assistance and admittance to Indian health clinics. The USDA also provides free commodities to native Americans.

Diabetes is a serious health problem among Indians. The Seneca-Cayuga Health Clinic and the Claremore Indian Hospital treat that disease and other ailments. Some 150,000 patients are served each year at these two facilities. Improved funding and staffing is needed.

The Indians of northeast Oklahoma are important to society. Charles Banks Wilson, a Miami artist, has made a career of capturing the "real" Indians through his paintings. He says the tribes which came to the area gave the people of the region a great vantage point of the Indian transformation.

Through this magazine, *The Indians of Northeast Oklahoma* is attempting to provide a better understanding of the Indian heritage, culture, problems, and goals. Although many Missouri Southern students are of Indian descent, few actually know much about the people of northeast Oklahoma. So, in the remaining pages, take a closer look at the Quapaw, Wyandotte, Peoria, Ottawa, Seneca-Cayuga, Miami, Modoc, and Eastern Shawnee tribes. They are *The Indians of Northeast Oklahoma*.

Chart MAGAZINE

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Tribe no longer has a chief

Quapaws, other tribes focus on economic development

By Lisa Snyder
Staff Writer

In the last 30 years the Quapaw tribe has experienced many changes—most noticeable is that it no longer has a chief.

The last chief was Victor Griffin, who led the tribe from 1929-58. He was considered physically incapable of leadership late in his tenure, and a business committee was elected to run the affairs of the tribe.

The business committee of 1956 consisted of Robert Whitebird, Sr., chairman; Walter King, Jr., vice chairman; and Harry Gilmore, secretary-treasurer.

Gilmore is now chairman of the tribe. "I've gone through the ranks," he said. "I've been vice chairman three or four times. This is my first term as chairman."

The term for a chairman is two years, and a person is allowed to serve three terms. Gilmore said he is like a "general manager" when it comes to tribal affairs.

"I do just about everything," he said. "I don't know exactly how to explain it. I call it a general manager of the tribe."

tribes in northeast Oklahoma, are focusing on economic development.

"We have a bingo place and we're working on various other programs," said Gilmore. "We're working on a convenience store, we're working on a hotel...out here on our reservation. We have 526 acres out there and our own water and sewage system."

All bingo proceeds are going toward the establishment of a scholarship fund.

The major event for the tribe is the annual Quapaw Pow-wow, held over the Fourth of July weekend.

"It's the oldest and largest pow-wow in the country," said Gilmore.

According to Gilmore, more than 60,000 people attended the three-day event. More than 125 tribes were represented at the Pow-wow. Gilmore said that "nine times out of 10 the tribe comes out in the red" during the Pow-wow.

Featured at the pow-wow was a "bet" football game.

"That's where the members of the teams have to bet something and the winners get what was bet," said Gilmore. "That's the original football game—the bet game. It's

"We have a bingo place and we're working on various other programs. We're working on a convenience store, we're working on a hotel..."

—Harry Gilmore, chairman of the Quapaw tribe

"All of the resolutions we make have to be approved by the committee, so you're not out there alone. You're not totally 'Holy God,' you might call it. You haven't got total control."

The business committee consists of seven members: Gilmore; Lloyd Buffalo, vice chairman; Nancy Washington, secretary-treasurer; and four other members.

There are now 1,920 members of the Quapaw tribe. Despite the nearly 2,000 members, only three full-blood Quapaw remain: Robert Whitebird, Sr., Clara Mae Goodeagle Boop, and Jean Ann Blue.

The last person to fluently speak the Quapaw language was Gilmore's late mother.

"We don't have a dictionary or any written language," he said.

The Quapaws, like several of the other

tough.

"You have to be 16 or older to play, and you can't play unless you bet something. Or if you don't bet something and play, your score doesn't count. The women throw and the men kick, which is hard for the men today."

The pow-wow also included song and dance of many tribes. The Round Dance, the War Dance, the Tail Dance, the Snake Dance, the Buffalo Dance, and the Two Step were the main events.

The reason for these dances is often misunderstood. For example, the War Dance, contrary to common belief, did not precede battle. Its meaning was spiritual. It is a dance in which the Indians of the plains display their emotions, whether it be a dance of sorrow for a fallen warrior or one of happiness for a great battle victory.



Spectators at the Quapaw Pow-wow observe a drumming and dancing ceremony.

Quapaws played major history role

By Lisa Snyder
Staff Writer

Now living in northeast Oklahoma, the Quapaw Indians were originally inhabitants of Arkansas.

Known by early explorers as the Arkansaw, the Quapaws played a major role in American history that is often overlooked. During the 18th century, France and Spain both relied on the Quapaws to uphold their imperial ambitions west of the Mississippi River. They were also allies to the United States until they were considered an impediment to the agricultural growth of the Arkansas River valley and moved to the Indian Territory.

After the Louisiana Purchase, the U.S. recognized the Quapaw Indians as the owners of all the land south of the Arkansas River, which included what was known as the Arkansas Territory and present Oklahoma. The northern area of Oklahoma was claimed by the Osage.

In 1818, the Quapaws entered a treaty in which they were induced to cede to the U.S. all of their grounds except a small tract on the south side of the Arkansas River, between Arkansas Post and Little Rock. They were paid \$4,000 and an annuity of about \$1,000 in goods. This tract of land was also desired by the white people.

In 1824 at Little Rock, under the influence of whiskey, each of the four Quapaw

chiefs accepted \$500. The Quapaws were induced to enter another treaty in which they gave this land to the U.S. and agreed to relocate to the Red River. For this, they were to receive \$6,000 and an annuity of \$1,000 for 11 years. During all of this moving, the Quapaws were given the worst land where crop failure and food shortages often drastically cut into the tribe's population.

After losing their land and one-fourth of their population, the survivors wandered back to their old homes along the Arkansas River. With the Indians having no title to the land, the whites destroyed their improvements and cheated them out of their horses, cattle, and hogs.

Reservation life was traumatic and forced the Quapaws to all but abandon their tribal life. But their life on the reservation also brought great wealth to many of the Quapaws. The U.S. was unaware of the resources available on their new land. Lead and zinc ore were discovered on the reservation. This discovery made many of the Quapaws some of the wealthiest people in the nation. Today, old mines can still be seen on the reservation as a reminder of their prosperous past.

The tribe made its home on the banks of Spring River and was able to revive old customs and seek to achieve some status as an ethnic group. The Quapaws are a people proud of their forefathers and their accomplishments.



More than 60,000 attend three-day Quapaw event



(Above left) Getting ready for the ceremony, an Indian father helps his son with his scarf. (Left) A little girl watches her friend prepare for the evening. (Above) A dancer makes the final touches to his headdress.



(Above) Two Indian boys enjoy celebrating the Fourth of July while their relatives participate in the Quapaw Pow-wow. (Left) In preparation for the Pow-wow, one dancer braids another dancer's hair.

Photos by
Sean Vanslyke

(Top) Indian drummers provide the beat for the Quapaw Pow-wow. (Above) A little Indian girl wipes her eyes as her mother looks for prospective buyers of moccasins. (Right) Before selling a hat, an Indian man sprays the brim.

County takes name from Wyandottes

Tribe makes several stops before Oklahoma arrival

By Rob Smith
Editor-in-Chief

While the beginnings of the Wyandotte tribe are not tied to a specific year, records do show that the tribe was forced to trek thousands of miles because of other Indians and the "pale faces."

The tribe was formed from the remaining parts of three separate Indian groups. The tribes were the Nation du Petun, the Hurons, and the Neutral Nation. The tribes were originally located in what became the provinces of Quebec and Ontario, Canada before journeying around the Great Lakes, through much of the Old Northwest, and ending up in northeast Oklahoma.

During the early years of the tribe, sometime in the 1500's, the tribe used hunting and fishing to cover most of its economic needs. Later, growing corn, squash, peas, pumpkins, sunflowers, and tobacco provided for many of its needs.

The Wyandotte tribe originated in an area near Saint James Bay in Canada. The tribe's first moves were gradual, drifting down from the Saint James Bay area, into an area called Huronia between Georgian Bay and Lake Simcoe. Making a major move in the 1640's, the tribe and its allies were forced to vacate some of their northern lands by the Iroquois Confederation. The French assisted the tribe in moving to an area south of Huronia, near Detroit.

The tribe then fled to Mackinac Island, but the tribe was again forced to abandon the area by the numerous Iroquois. The next stop was near Green Bay, Wis., where it was again flushed out by the expanding Iroquois Confederation.

The Wyandottes, who were continuing to decrease in population with each successive conflict with the much more powerful Iroquois tribes, headed for higher ground again and avoided their flooding rivals. The tribe went south, to an area in northern Illinois. The Illinois tribe forced the Wyandottes out, much the same as the Iroquois.

The Wyandottes headed north to Point Saint Esprit near the Apostle Islands on Lake Superior, an area the tribe, once again, believed to be safe from all the other expanding nations.

While the tribe had seen missionaries as early as 1603, it was Father Jacques Marquette who was put in charge of the Roman Catholic mission at Point Saint Esprit. Numbering about 400 to 500 members, the tribe was chased out of its home in 1671—this time by the Sioux, a tribe whose power was too great for the Wyandottes. The attacks by the Iroquois continued on into the 1670's.

The tribe returned to its former location on Mackinac Island with the help of Marquette and the protection of its ally, the French.

Beginning in 1684, the tribe was unable to supply the French with the furs they



needed. The Wyandottes had once served the French by buying the furs from tribes to the west. The tribe would then load their birchbark canoes with the pelts, taking them to Montreal. Many of the Wyandottes died transporting the valuable furs because the Iroquois often attacked the Wyandotte canoe brigades.

In 1701, many of the tribe's members moved to their former home in near Detroit at the suggestion of Antoine de la Mothe Cadillac. Tripling its population, the tribe stood by the French, who were having a difficult time living near some of the other tribes in Ohio and Michigan. It was during this time, when the tribe served as a middleman between the French and other Indians, that the tribe became known as the "Keepers of the Council Fire."

By 1725, the tribe had begun to separate somewhat, with a part of the Wyandotte tribe venturing into northwest Ohio. The band was led by Orontony, a Wyandotte chief who was unhappy with the French. Orontony started his own Wyandotte town near Sandusky, Ohio. These Indians traded freely with the British, something the French opposed, and even planned an attack with several other tribes on the French in Detroit. This plan was foiled by the French and, in 1748, the Wyandottes in Ohio were forced to go west to save their own lives.

When Orontony died, unity between the two versions of the Wyandotte tribe and the alliance with the French were restored.

Fifteen years later, the Wyandottes took part in the attacks led by Pontiac, an Ottawa chief who rallied several Indian factions against the British. Between 1783 and 1790, the Wyandottes and half a dozen other tribes, armed by the British, killed 1,500 Ohio settlers. In 1785, the Wyandottes signed their first major treaty with the British. The Treaty of Fort McIntosh:

- provided peace between the United States and the Delawares, Chippewas, Ottawas in addition to the Wyandottes.
- brought the tribes under American

domination.

■ forced the tribes to give up lands to the United States.

■ established reservations for each of the tribes in the Northwest Territory.

While the treaty was to provide peace, war between the the frontiersmen and the Indians continued. In 1794, the tribe suffered great losses at Fallen Timbers. Tahre was the only Wyandotte chief to survive the Indian slaughter.

A year later, the Wyandottes agreed to another treaty. The Treaty of Greenville:

■ gave the United States most of the tribe's land in Ohio.

■ gave the Wyandottes \$20,000 worth of goods.

■ gave the Indians \$10,000 to be shared by the signing tribes.

In 1817, still another treaty was signed by the Wyandottes. This particular treaty gave the government 3,360,000 acres for \$4,000 annually. A reservation was set up near Upper Sandusky, Ohio. Later treaties increased the size of the Ohio reservation and created two more, one in Ohio and the other in Michigan.

By 1830, the government began pressuring the tribe to give up its land east of the Mississippi River. It was not until 1842 that the Wyandottes signed a removal treaty. The treaty provided that the tribe give up all of its land in Ohio and Michigan. The Wyandottes were promised 148,000 acres somewhere west of the Mississippi River. The tribe was to be given \$17,500 annually, \$500 to support a school, and \$10,000 was to cover the expenses of removal.

The 750 Wyandottes traveled by steamboat to Westport, Mo., and eventually settled near Kansas City. Wyandotte County, which contains the city of Kansas City, Kan., was named after the Indian settlers. The Wyandottes called the site where the cliffs met the river *Kyoooh-rah-doooh-hih*. The Missouri River, which is as important to current Kansas City residents as it was to the Wyandottes, was called the *Kyoooh-tahn-deh-yoooh-rah*.

In 1856, Wyandotte City was established. Later, the name was officially changed to Kansas City. Today, many cities and counties remain from the tribe's settling specific regions of the country.

After the Wyandotte reserve was settled, the tribe signed several treaties, including an 1855 treaty allowing members of the tribe to become United States citizens. Taumomee, the Wyandotte chief during the signing of the treaty, was a reluctant signer. At the time, he was called Hat John by most Americans. Taumomee Avenue still exists in Kansas City.

Not receiving monies the government had promised in 1857, Chief Matthew Modar led some members of the tribe to northeast Oklahoma. Still other Wyandottes traveled on their own, going back to Ohio and Canada.

The Seneca tribe, once part of the Iroquois Confederation, gave the Wyandottes 33,000 acres in 1859. This transaction was never approved by the federal government. By 1865, dissension with the Wyandotte tribe split it into two groups again.

In 1867, the Wyandottes signed another treaty. This treaty proposed that the Seneca tribe sell 20,000 acres to the government for \$20,000. The United States would then sell the land to the Wyandottes for the same price.

Before this land sale was made, the government owed the Wyandottes over \$83,000, but to this day much of this debt remains unresolved.

In 1937, the tribe was officially named the Wyandotte Tribe of Oklahoma. The Wyandotte headquarters is located where the Wyandotte version of the Trail of Tears ended, in Wyandotte, Okla. The tribe's population is over 3,100. There are no longer any Indian full-bloods in the tribe and because of intermarriage there are only 60 members who are quarter-blood or more. Five hundred of the Wyandottes live in Oklahoma while the rest are scattered throughout the world, with many living in Kansas, Michigan, and Canada.

By Rob Smith
Editor-in-Chief

When Leaford Bearskin won the Indian Achievement Award in September 1986, it was obvious this man was more than just an Indian chief.

The award is given by the Indian Council Fire to an Indian for outstanding achievement.

Bearskin, chief of the Wyandottes, is currently working in his third occupation. He spent more than 20 years in the Air Force and flew a B-24 Liberator during World War II. He joined the Air Force in 1939, the same year he graduated from high school. Bearskin said his reasons for joining the Air Force were simple.

"I always had a desire to fly an airplane," he said. "Some buddies and I were in Miami (Okla.) and there was a sign with Uncle Sam saying 'I Want You.'"

When the young Indian joined the Air Force, he realized what he was about to do would take even more than "a desire to fly."

Bearskin was part of the Army Air Corp and spent much of his time flying heavy bombers in New Guinea. He flew 46 combat missions as an aircraft commander. This series of missions began in May 1943 and ended in March 1944.

"We spent some time bombing Rabaul, a big Japanese base," Bearskin said. "We were in the area where Coral Sea took place."

The Indian was in Alaska when the initial attack on Pearl Harbor took place.

Still, Bearskin believes there is at least one good thing about the war in the Pacific.

"My whole crew went together and we



all came back without a scratch," he said.

After the war ended, Bearskin served as a squadron commander and flew 29 missions during the Berlin Airlift in 1948. He worked as a squadron commander in Korea and as assistant headquarters commandant in Omaha, Neb., where the Strategic Air Command Headquarters is located.

Bearskin said during his career in the Air Force he was often the only Indian in his organization.

"A long time ago, it wasn't too popular to be an Indian," he said. "I have been fortunate. Sometimes, I would be the only Indian in my whole military organization. At least I was the only one who would admit

it (being an Indian).

"One thing I did notice was that regardless of a man's skin, their blood all came out the same color."

When he ended his flying career, and prior to becoming chief of the Wyandottes, Bearskin was part of the civil service for 20 years. He still worked for the Air Force, but was a civilian employee. The programs Bearskin was involved in were transportation, intercontinental missiles, and war plans.

In September 1983 Bearskin was named chief of the Wyandottes. He helped the tribe collect \$5.7 million from the government for land the Wyandottes sold the United States in 1842. He has also helped with the development of Wyandotte economic programs. For example, Bearskin has spearheaded efforts that sent nine Wyandottes to colleges last year.

"I'm aiming to motivate our young people to be proud they are Indians," he said. "I'm very proud of my ancestry. They were known as the 'Keepers of the Council Fire.'"

In addition to his work for college-bound Wyandottes, Bearskin rewrote and revised the tribal constitution. The Bureau of Indian Affairs approved the changed constitution only 18 months after it was introduced. The revised constitution gave every Wyandotte present at the annual meeting voting rights. Before the revisions, only those Wyandottes living in Oklahoma (about 500 of the more than 3,000 Wyandottes) were given the opportunity to vote.

Still, Bearskin has one primary goal as chief of the Wyandottes.

"The main thing is to do something for our people."

Tribe works to develop economy

By Rob Smith
Editor-in-Chief

Traveling in birchbark canoes, warring against the "pale faces," and speaking an unwritten language are no longer part of today's Indian tribe.

According to Leaford Bearskin, chief of the Wyandotte tribe, today's Indian tribe spends much of its time investing tribal funds and looking out for the needs of tribal members.

Elected as chief in 1983, Bearskin is busy working on several development ideas for the depressed northeast Oklahoma economy.

On Sept. 6, 1986, the tribe opened the Turtle Stop, a convenience store built on tribal land near Wyandotte, Okla. Bearskin obtained a \$325,000 grant to construct the complex.

"The Turtle Stop is the first economic development our tribe has had," Bearskin said. "Eventually, the money will go into the tribal fund."

"We are just at the break-even point now." Controversy surrounds the Turtle Stop. The tribe contends there should be no sales tax for tribe members. All non-Indians are taxed at 6.25 percent, the normal sales tax rate in Oklahoma. Debate over the no tax issue is continuing. Debate also continues over a cigarette tax involving the tribe.

While The Turtle Stop is the start of the tribe's economic development, the Wyandottes provided nine members with college scholarships for 1986-87.

"This is the first time we have ever done this," Bearskin said. "I hope to continue the program and offer more scholarships."

"We hope to look back and see 900 Wyandottes in college."

In addition to The Turtle Stop and the scholarships, Bearskin plans to make investments that will not only help his tribe, but that will also benefit economically depressed Ottawa County.

"The (closing of the) Goodrich plant in Miami just demolished the whole area," Bearskin said. "This is an agriculture community."

While Bearskin believes Ottawa County is agricultural, he thinks tourism may be on the rise for the area.

"Think about all the people who come into Oklahoma and immediately think, 'Where are the Indians?'" he said. "The Turtle Stop will really benefit from the tourists."

Bearskin, in an attempt to boost the tourism in the area, would like to build a theme park near the area.

"We've contacted 13 major theme parks," he said. "Our income is very limited. It would have to be a joint venture between the tribe and the park."

"We are stuck on the theme park idea. We would open factories, housing, anything that will provide money for our tribe."

Bearskin said the tribe has looked into opening nursing homes, a helicopter service, and a sewing factory.

"We are looking for any kind of operation we can develop," he said.

Still, Bearskin really has only one goal for the tribe.

"I'm 65 years old," he said. "I'd like to leave knowing that all the goals we've set are in sight."

Wyandotte Tribe TURTLE STOP



The Turtle Stop, a convenience store owned and operated by the Wyandotte tribe of Oklahoma, is one of the first steps in a series of economic development plans for the tribe. The store is located in Wyandotte, Okla.

Structure of tribe is similar to that of U.S. system

By Stacey Sanders
Staff Writer

Once believed almost extinct, the Peoria Indian tribe now claims more than 2,400 quarter-bloods as part of the northeast Oklahoma tribe.

According to Louis E. Myers, chief of the Peorias, the tribe consists of four united tribes—the Kaskaskia, Piankashaw, Wea, and Peoria.

"The four tribes were almost annihilated in 1803," he said.

They were continuously harassed by the white settlers thereafter. Baptiste Peoria, a dominant leader of the tribe, led the Peorias to Indian Territory along Spring River running through southeast Kansas and northeast Oklahoma.

president and the tribal council as our congress," said Myers. "We have a constitution that is our charter, you might say."

The chief's duties include presiding over meetings of the council and chairing the tribe's business committee.

"We have democratic elections where the voting age is 18," said Myers.

Myers said the minimum age for holding an office is 25. A two-thirds majority of the voters is required for a candidate to win an election.

"I am currently filling out the term (as chief) for Rodney Arnette, who recently passed away," said Myers.

The main income of the Peoria tribe comes from its bingo hall and convenience stores, which are operated by the tribe.

Myers said the business affairs of the tribe

"I am proud that I am what I am. I get great satisfaction in being a part of the eight tribes of northeast Oklahoma."

—Louis E. Myers, chief of the Peorias

After Oklahoma became a state in 1907, the Peorias became official citizens of Oklahoma.

According to Myers, the racism against Indians is in the past.

"When I was a boy, people would not even let their kids play with me," he said. "Now, everyone wants to be an Indian."

"I am proud that I am what I am," he added. "I get great satisfaction in being a part of the eight tribes of northeast Oklahoma."

The Peoria, Miami, and Cherokee Indians are all involved with the same health and nutrition programs.

"Our stuff is sponsored by the federal government," said Myers. "This is done because they have broken so many treaties in the past."

The tribe's government is structured similarly to the United States government.

"I am the president, but I am known as the chief, with a second chief as my vice

are computerized. He said he believes his tribe is probably the richest tribe in northeast Oklahoma.

At 72, Myers said he knows some of the tribal language, which he said is similar to the Spanish language.

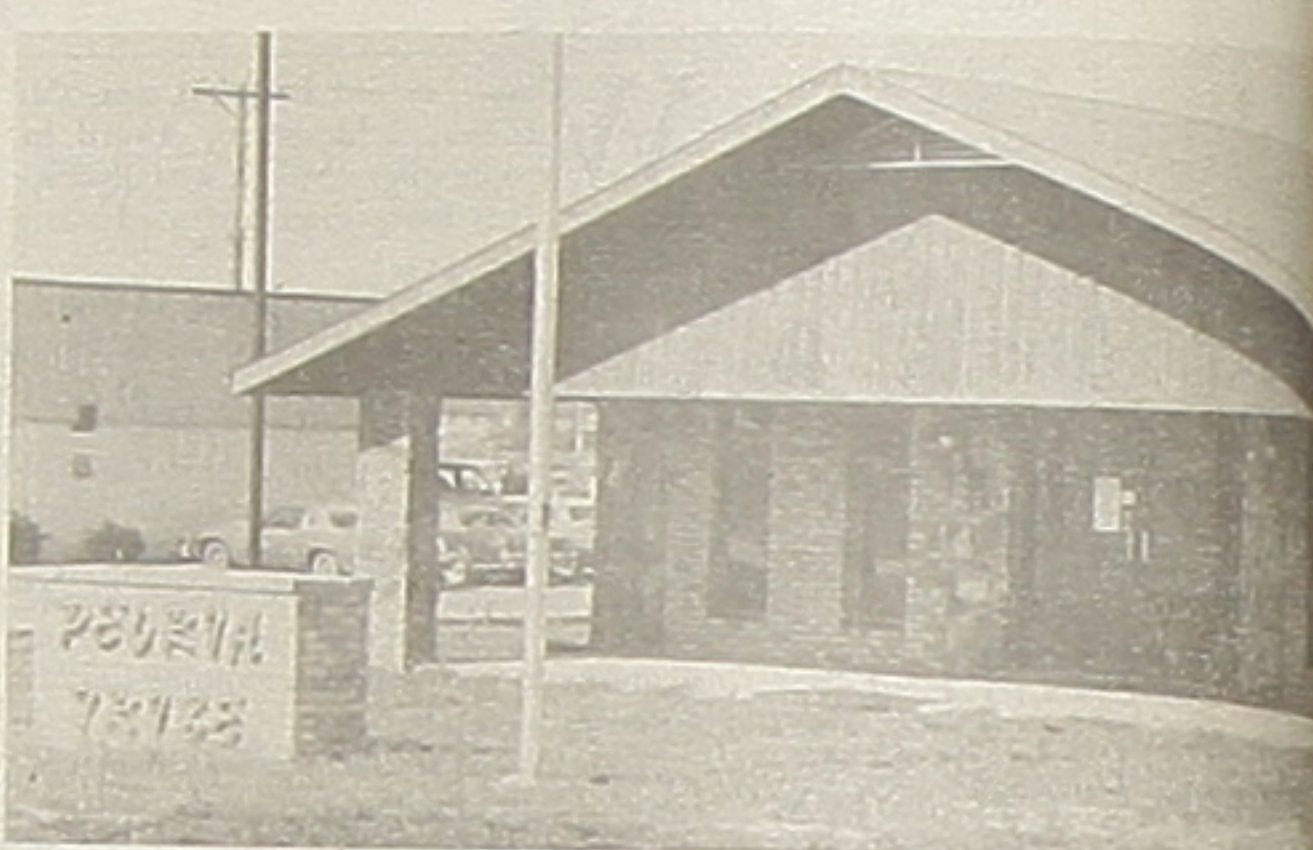
"I'm just about the only one who knows any part of the language," he said. "It is strictly a spoken language."

Members of the tribe subscribe mainly to the Roman Catholic and Protestant Christian faiths.

"The belief of the Great White Spirit went out when the language went out," said Myers.

In earlier times, the traditional tribal dress was in the style of the French, with long coats and ribbon ties. The modern headdresses are made of owl feathers or a variety of bird feathers.

"The traditional (headdress) uses eagle feathers, but they (eagles) are almost extinct," Myers said.



(Top) The Peoria Tribal Office is located in Miami, Okla. (Above) This Peoria Indian School, located between Miami and Quapaw, Okla., is no longer in service.

French, Peorias worked together

In the early 17th century, French trappers discovered a tribe of Indians along the southern shores of Lake Michigan and named them the Peoria.

In French, the word peoria means "he comes carrying a pack on his back."

The French and the Indians developed a business between themselves. The Peorias traded furs and skins to the French in exchange for cloth products and guns. The Indians also guided the French trappers throughout the Great Lakes region.

French missionaries and teachers set up missions in order to civilize the Peoria tribal members. This effort failed, but the Roman Catholic religion remained with the Peorias.

The early Peorias strongly believed they each had a supernatural animal guardian, such as a fox, deer, eagle, or bear. This was called their "totem" which supposedly followed them wherever they would go.

The center of this belief was focused around Manabus, whom the Peorias believed recreated the earth after his enemies had destroyed it thousands of years ago by flood. All aspects of life such as birth, death, and the changing of the seasons was "the work of Manabus."

Peorias followed a highly ritualistic burial service. Their religion emphasized a life

after death.

Continuous warfare for the Peorias against their enemies, beginning in 17th century, hurt the tribe and cut into its population. In desperation, the Peorias signed a treaty with the government for 640 acres in northern Missouri. With this signing a promise was given to the Peorias that no white would enter their new lands.

The Peorias were supplied with cooking utensils, horses, carts, and food needed for the journey to Missouri.



Students at Northeastern Oklahoma State University in Tahlequah play Indian football.



Charles Dawes

Chief publishes dictionary

Dawes wants to pass on tribe's traditional values

By Tammy Baker
Staff Writer

Caring for the welfare of the Ottawa Indian tribe, Charles Dawes is concerned with the passing on of the traditional Ottawa values and ceremonies.

"Our number one goal as a tribe is perpetuation," said Dawes, the second chief of the Ottawa tribe. "We want to pass on to our future generations all of the traditional values we ourselves grew up with."

Another area of interest to Dawes is education.

"A year and a half ago we did a survey of Ottawa students and their grade point averages in school," he said. "And we found that, on the average, the Indian students attained better grades than the general public."

"This was great news. And we want to maintain that level of education."

Dawes is one of the trustees at Ottawa (Kan.) University.

"The university has about 450 students," he said. "It is rather small and somewhat expensive, but about 95 percent of the students are getting some type of financial aid."

Dawes, a 1950 graduate of Joplin Junior College, has recently published a dictionary of the Ottawa language.

The dictionary lists thousands of words in the Ottawa language and their counterparts in the English language.

"I spent nearly nine years and close to 5,000 hours preparing this dictionary," said Dawes. "That includes everything—re-

searching, arranging, and publishing."

He has been active in Indian ceremonies all of his life and has spent nearly 25 years in tribal management.

"I have most of the ceremonial duties in the tribe," said Dawes. "I do many of the dances at the pow-wows. I also name our babies and bury our dead."

He is also a representative for the Ottawas at tribal meetings.

Dawes is greatly concerned with the issue of blood quantum to determine Indian heritage.

"The issue of blood quantum is a real sore spot with tribes right now," he said. "American Indians are the only people in this world who have to prove descendancy by blood quantum."

"For 22 years we were not even an official tribe according to the federal government," Dawes said. "We were denied all health and educational services provided by the government."

On May 15, 1978, the Ottawa Tribe of Oklahoma was reinstated as an official American tribe of Indians.

"It took a lot of hard work and lots of hours to do, but we succeeded in once again becoming an American Indian tribe," he said.

Dawes said he is proud of his heritage and has worked hard to maintain those values he treasures.

He said that with the help of future generations, there will always be an Ottawa tribe in Oklahoma "for as long as the grass grows and the river flows."

Tribe endows Ottawa University with a grant of 20,000 acres

By Tammy Baker
Staff Writer

Long before the white man stepped upon North American soil, there were Indians living on the continent. One of the first tribes found to be living in what is now the United States was the Ottawa.

The Ottawas were located, for the most part, in the area of the Great Lakes. The tribe lived near these lakes until the late 1830's when it was moved from its reservations in Ohio to what is now the area of Ottawa, Kan.

The Ottawas are a part of the Algonquin linguistic group. Ottawa means "to trade" or "to barter."

Because of the sharing of the same linguistic origins, the Ottawas are closely related to the Arapaho, Cheyenne, Delaware, Kickapoo, Miami, Peoria, Shawnee, and Blackfoot tribes.

The closest tribal relatives to the Ottawas are probably the Chippewa and the Menominee. It is thought that, at some time in their history, they were all three a part of one tribe.

According to a history published by the Ottawa tribe of Oklahoma, the most famous personality of the Ottawa tribe was War Chief Pontiac.

Pontiac was the principal chief of the Ottawas and the virtual head of a loose kind of confederacy consisting of the Ottawas, Menominees, and the Chippewas. He was the son of an Ottawa chief and

a Chippewa mother. His ancestry was of great advantage to him, increasing his influence over both tribes.

Pontiac led the Ottawa tribes to a victory against the English general Braddock and was treated with honor by many French officers.

In 1769, soon after his arrival in St. Louis, Pontiac was invited to a feast by a number of Indians. A short time after leaving the feast, his murdered body was found in a wooded area nearby.

It is believed that an English trader, by the name of Williamson, bribed an Indian into murdering the Ottawa leader.

One of the marks left in Kansas by the tribe is Ottawa University.

On Feb. 27, 1860, the Kansas territorial legislature had approved a charter for Roger Williams University, later known as Ottawa University. However, due to the start of the Civil War, little was done to get the school started.

John Tecumseh (Taui) Jones, the chief Ottawa interpreter, made the suggestion that the Ottawa Indians might endow the school with a grant of land.

The Ottawas proposed to give the school a grant of land amounting to 20,000 acres. However, because the Indians were wards of the federal government, treaties had to be passed before any actual negotiations could be made.

On June 24, 1863, a treaty was passed to grant the land to the school.

A second treaty was negotiated four years later, in which the university was allowed

to buy an additional 7,221 acres at an appraised value to be sold for whatever profit could be made on the resale.

Not long before this second treaty was made, the school was rechartered and the name was changed to Ottawa University. The new charter was granted April 21, 1865.

Not long after the rechartering of Ottawa University, the tribe was again removed to what is now Oklahoma.

This move was partially due to the pressure of the whites to obtain the land held by the Ottawa tribe in Kansas.

The chief at the time, John Wilson, realized that if the tribe sold out and the money was put in a trust fund by the government, the entire tribe would be homeless and penniless.

In an attempt to save his tribe from this fate, he instituted negotiations to purchase a tract of land on the western end of the Shawnee Reserve in the Indian Territory (Oklahoma).

The Ottawas bought this tract of land, consisting of 14,863 acres, through a direct contract with the Shawnees that received governmental approval.

This was now the homeland of the remnants of the three bands of the Ottawas who had come to Kansas from Ohio.

While still in Kansas, the Ottawas were first introduced to religion. The first missionary to labor among the Ottawas was Johnathan Meeker of the Baptist Church.

Although some of the Indians were adverse to the thought of having a missionary among them, Meeker's kindness,

sincerity, and tact finally won them over.

The church was moved to Oklahoma along with the tribe and set up at the present location.

During the move, tragedy struck. John Wilson, the Ottawa chief, was killed after being kicked by a horse. His body was moved to the new location and was buried in the first grave in Ottawa Cemetery—one of the largest Indian burial grounds in that section of Oklahoma.

On February 8, 1887, the Dawes Act became law, allowing the Ottawas to "be like everybody else." The Dawes Act was essentially designed to make the Indian a full-fledged member of society and a self-supportive individual. The act initially gave each Indian an allotment of 80 acres on which to make a home. The government would hold the acreage in trust for 25 years at which time the individual would be given patent-in-fee. The land would be placed on the tax pools and the Indian would be given citizenship.

However, when Oklahoma became a state, its citizens wanted Indian land to be placed on the open market, and on May 27, 1908, the legislature removed much of the land from trust and opened it to white purchase.

Nearly 90 percent of all allottees were forced to sell their land, and for all practical purposes, the Ottawas and many other tribes in the area became landless.



Celebration features artists, dancers, crafts

Artists, Indian dancers, craftsmen, and the world's largest powwow were featured at Red Earth '87, held June 5-7 in downtown Oklahoma City.

Red Earth '87, the first of what will become an annual event, attracted approximately 50,000 people, according to Jereldine Redcorn, director of the celebration. About half of those attending were native Americans.

"There were over 100 tribes represented," said Redcorn, who is part Caddo and part Potawatomi. "The dances were the most popular attraction. There were six different sessions held."

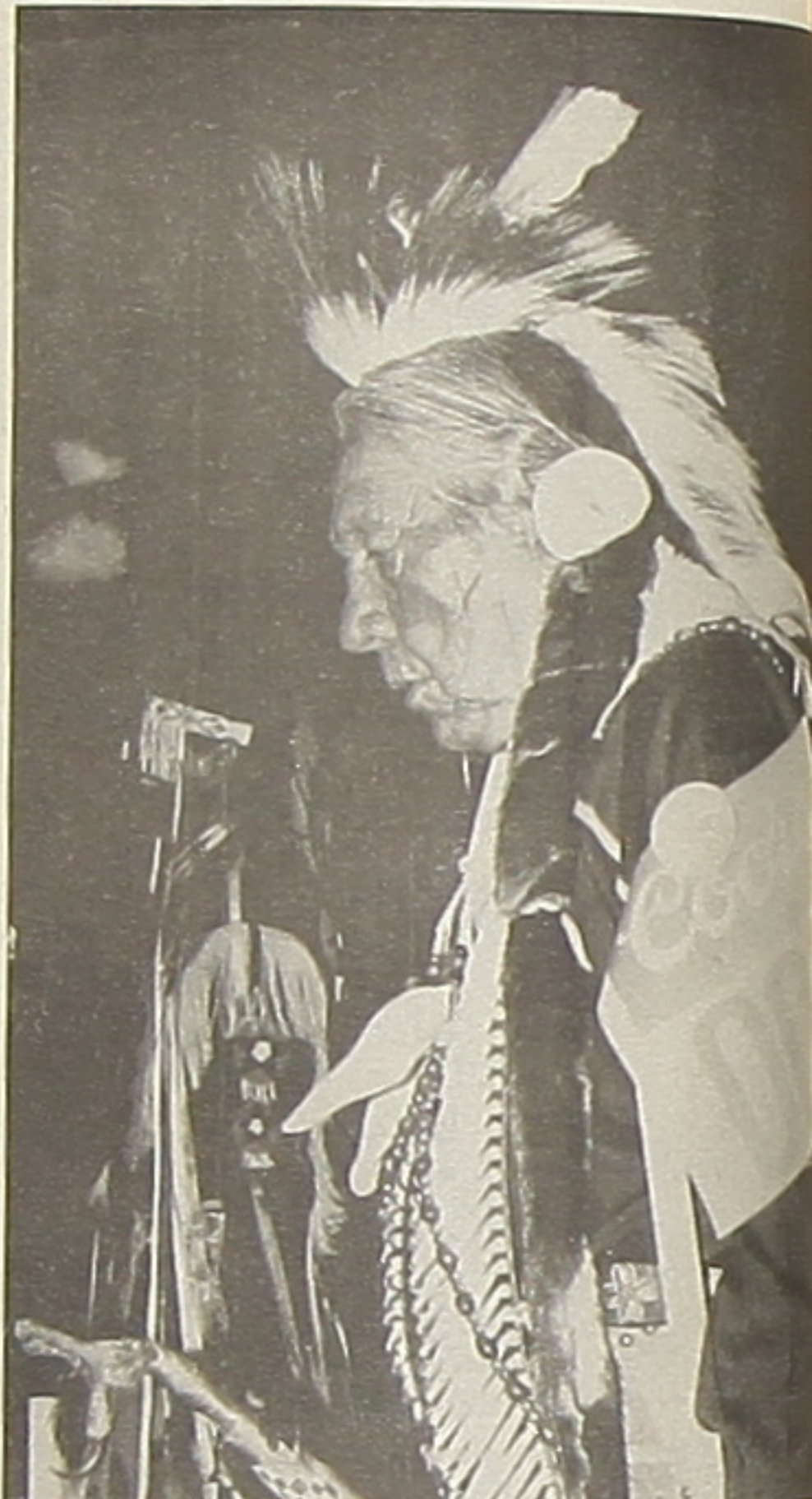
Redcorn said \$75,000 in prize money was given to the Indians for participation in a variety of activities. An additional \$400,000 was taken in by the craftsmen and artists at Red Earth.

"It's an economic director as well as a cultural endeavor for the Oklahoma City area," Redcorn said. "The goal (of Red Earth) is to create a market for Indian arts in Oklahoma City."

According to Redcorn, Red Earth is sponsored by 20 different businesses and is a "community project."

Red Earth has a staff of three full-time employees who have already started preparing for next year's event in Oklahoma City. The dates for Red Earth '88 are June 3-5.

"We were pleased with the celebration this year," Redcorn said. "We are hoping for an even better celebration next year."





Photos by Sean Vanslyke

Purchase of Elk River Resort would aid commerce

By Mark Mulik
Managing Editor

Commerce in the Seneca-Cayuga Indian tribe of northeast Oklahoma is on the brink of explosion.

"Right now, we're entertaining thoughts of trying to purchase the Elk River Resort," said James Allen, tribal chief.

The Elk River Resort, located just north of Grove, Okla., on state highway 10, consists of 46 acres of property. On this land, there is a restaurant, store, service station, marina, boat storage building, boat repair shop, recreational vehicle park, and mobile home park. This resort is located on Elk River directly across the highway from two establishments owned by the Seneca-Cayuga, Ranch Resort and The Lighthouse Restaurant.

Ranch Resort consists of five cabins, RV hookup, and a store.

The Lighthouse is a restaurant serving prime rib, steak, lobster, and several Italian dishes.

"I would pit the food quality and the atmosphere and the physical appearance of the restaurant against any top-notch restaurant in Joplin, Springfield, or anywhere else in the area," said Allen.

"We (the Indians) have graduated from 'the buffalo roams' and everything," said Logan Line, manager of The Lighthouse. "Now, we're into the mainstream of business."

The purchase of the Elk River Resort could be as much as an \$800,000 investment to the tribe.



"If we're successful in purchasing it," Allen said, "why naturally, bingo funds (from the tribe's bingo hall) would be used to develop it further; and we've had thoughts of building a motel down there, helping with bingo operations, revenues."

Said Allen, "Private studies show that the impact of B.F. Goodrich closing here in Miami (Okla.) doesn't have that great of an effect on that particular area—that end of the lake."

He said the major expense of the tribe is salaries. The Seneca-Cayuga employ about 44 persons: 10 at the administrative office, 17 at the bingo hall, 10 at The Lighthouse, three at Ranch Resort, and four with the Home Improvement Program (HIP), which is a Bureau of Indian Affairs program.

The tribe also partially owns an Indian health center in Miami. Allen said in a few years the tribe would completely own the building containing the health center. The building will be owned but not operated by the Seneca-Cayugas.

As for tribal lands, the Seneca-Cayuga own approximately 1,200 acres in northeast Oklahoma. Most of the acreage is about 30 miles south of Miami.

"We have kind of hodge-podge-type plots of land," said Allen. "We have 30 acres here, 40 acres here, and so on. The biggest parcel of land we have in one spot is probably about 120 acres."

Outside funding of the tribe comes from the federal government, through the Bureau

of Indian Affairs (BIA) and the Indian Health Service.

Through a program called Basic Grant, Indian tribes are allowed to gain funds in order to operate an administrative tribal office.

According to Allen, the Seneca-Cayuga tribe also has social programs through contracts with the BIA, including HIP (Home Improvement Program), which provides housing assistance; Social Service, a general assistance program helping members of the tribe out of financial emergencies and helping the unemployed of the tribe; a technical assistance program, which helps provide education in technical fields; and an adult education program.

By Mark Mulik
Managing Editor

Actually a nation within a nation, the Seneca-Cayuga Indians exist as does any Indian tribe in the United States with its own individual government and culture.

The officials of the tribe include a chief, a second chief, a secretary/treasurer, and three council members.

"It's an election-type government, basically the same as in any city, town, or county," said James Allen, Seneca-Cayuga chief. "The officials are elected to two-year terms."

"I'm the chief, and I'm in power to act on behalf of the tribe on matters outside of tribal business. For instance, dealing with politicians, bureaucrats, dealing with federal people and state people."

As the chief of the northeast Oklahoma tribe, Allen works with the federal government, the Bureau of Indian Affairs, (on an almost daily basis), the Indian Health Service, the Department of the Interior, and the Department of Agriculture.

In the United States, an Indian reservation is considered a "nation" unto itself, being regulated only by the federal government. Because of this, state and local governments do not have the right to be on an Indian reservation, unless a crime has been committed on a reservation involving a person who is not a member of the tribe. Allen said the Seneca-Cayuga tribe has a "working agreement" with local fire departments. For major crimes on reservations, the Federal Bureau of Investigation is alerted.

The three council members of the tribe form a business committee, which is in power to act on any business matters con-

cerning the tribe.

During a major conflict, the whole tribe may meet as a body. Allen said the full tribe has the authority to overrule the business committee on any matter that it sees fit.

"We have our regular ceremonial grounds, where we (all members of the tribe) meet once a year, in June," he said. "At this, the tribe hears the 'State of the Tribe Report,' which is like a State of the Union Address."

Allen, who has been the tribe's chief since 1973, was re-elected at the June meeting. He said the tribe is considered to be of small



size.

"There are some tribes which are smaller than ours, but we fall under the small tribe category," Allen said. "There are only three or four tribes which are termed large. Those would be the Navahos, Cherokees, Creeks, and possibly the Seminoles."

According to Allen, the Seneca-Cayuga tribe consists of about 750 members which live in the Miami area. Nationwide, there are about 2,500 members. None of those members living outside of the "local" area have an established tribe anywhere else in the country.

Relatives and forefathers of the Seneca-Cayugas include the Seneca tribe of New York and the Cayuga tribe of New York, both larger tribes than the united Seneca-Cayugas. Both of these tribes have reservations in up-state New York.

"Whenever they (some of the Senecas and the Cayugas) came down here to Oklahoma," said Allen, "there was such a small group of them they decided to unite and form a single form of government."

He said that within the Seneca-Cayuga tribe he only knows of two or three full-blooded members, and those members are "getting on in years." None of the younger members are full-bloods.

Allen said he is one-half Indian, one-half Caucasian. Of his Indian heritage, he is part Seneca-Cayuga, part Wyandotte—his Indian grandmother was a Seneca-Cayuga and his Indian grandfather was Wyandotte.

He said members of the tribe have Indian-sounding names, such as White Crow, but he and other tribe members are exceptions to that.

Allen said there are five different ceremonial "dances" during the year. The most important of these is the Green Corn ceremonial, a "thanksgiving celebration" which takes place the first week of August.

Members of the tribe are predominately of some Christian religion, yet follow the religious customs of their ancestors.

According to Sue Nuckolls, Seneca-Cayuga secretary/treasurer, tribe history and religion has never been recorded—not in writings, paintings, nor video or audio recordings of any kind.

"We've never recorded our songs or prayers," said Nuckolls. "We've always kept to ourselves."

Tribe has own culture, government

Tribe averages 430 people in nightly bingo sessions

By Mark Mulik
Managing Editor

Bingo on Indian reservations has been an ordeal since a U.S. Supreme Court decision in March was given in favor of the Indians. Still, there is dispute between federal and state jurisdiction regarding Indian reservations.

According to Frank Ducheneaux, counsel in Indian affairs in Washington, D.C., forms of Indian bingo are legal in any state which has passed laws to make them legal. He said the size of prize amounts, however, is not and cannot be regulated by the state in which a certain bingo hall operates.

The Bureau of Indian Affairs is generally responsible for carrying out laws for Indian tribes," said Ducheneaux, who assists the interior and insular affairs committee.

Ducheneaux said this committee has jurisdiction of Indian relations.

"I provide general advice and assistance to the committee in reference to Indian affairs," he said.

The Seneca-Cayuga bingo hall

Bingo began for the Seneca-Cayuga Indian tribe in 1982 when an outside contractor, David Allen, started a bingo hall on tribal property.

The bingo hall, which is located on Oklahoma Highway 10, just north of Grove, came under the management of a Seneca-Cayuga tribal member one and one-half years later. After nine months, Joe Winnie, the current bingo hall manager, took over. "We have been very successful," said Winnie. "On the average, we have some 430 people come in per night."

The Seneca-Cayuga bingo hall is open five nights per week, closed only on Mondays and Wednesdays.

Winnie said on game nights, players start arriving at the hall at about 4 p.m. The "regular" game session does not start until 7:30 p.m.

"We normally play two warm-up games," he said. "This just gets the people loosened up, ready to start the regular session. Plus, it gives them something to do to kill time, from the time they get there until 7:30."

A concession stand serves as additional income for the tribe. During the regular session, which usually lasts until 10:15 p.m., an average of 27 games are played.

A participant of the bingo games may spend a minimum of \$20, and get "enough" cards to play the whole regular session. The more money a person spends, the more bingo cards he or she receives to play.

Players at the Seneca-Cayuga hall use disposable paper bingo cards with ink blotters to mark the numbers on the cards. According to Winnie, a player can regularly play up to 18 cards at a time.

"We used to use 'hard cards' of cardboard," said Winnie, "but these took up too much space. Paper cards take up half as much space."

During the regular session, bingo players have a chance to win three jackpots. Each jackpot is for a different game.

The largest jackpot, the "Pick Eight," currently has a prize of \$50,000. To play this game, a participant selects eight numbers from one to 75. If all eight numbers the

player picks are correct, the prize money is won.

The Pick Eight jackpot was last won in early June. The jackpot, which increases as much as \$5,000 per week, has been won three times since December 1986, Winnie said.

The second largest jackpot, the "Progressive Blackout," normally has a prize amount from \$3,000 to \$9,000. The starting amount of \$3,000 is built up for each playing session it is not won. During play of this game, 53 numbers are called out, and the players attempt to cover the 24 numbers on their cards. A player has to completely fill, or "black out" his card to win. Winnie said the Progressive Blackout's jackpot once reached \$14,000.

The third jackpot, the "Bonanza" game, which is set at a \$2,000 amount, also is a 53-number blackout.

"Before the (Bonanza) game starts, we 'pull' or take out 45 numbers," he said. "And when we play the game, we call eight numbers, and if a player blacks out their card within those eight numbers, they receive the jackpot. That jackpot goes quite often."

Winnie said Oklahoma state law says the size of a jackpot is to be \$500 at maximum. But since activities on Indian reservations are regulated only by the federal government, the Seneca-Cayuga and the other Indian tribal bingo halls are allowed to have prize jackpots in the thousands.

"Not all customers of the bingo hall are Oklahomans," he said. "Two out of every five cars that come to the bingo hall have Missouri license plates on them."

"There are probably more customers from Arkansas and Missouri than there are from Oklahoma that play bingo."



Miami clinic serves tribes across nation

Claremore hospital stresses comprehensive treatment

By Dave Green
Staff Writer

Serving the health needs of 30,000 patients per year, the Seneca-Cayuga Indian Health Clinic is a vital part of Indian health care in northeast Oklahoma.

Located in Miami, the facility serves not only the Seneca-Cayuga tribe, but up to 75 different tribes throughout the United States.

"We have a lot of patients from the college (Northeast Oklahoma A&M in Miami) who are Indian and Eskimo that are eligible for our health care services, and they are from all over the states," said John Daugherty, Jr., clinic administrator.

Part of a system of over 700 hospitals and health clinics dedicated to the providing of medical services to American Indians, the Miami clinic offers a wide variety of services.

"We have on staff here two full-time physicians and one nurse practitioner," said Daugherty. "We also have a dentist and an optometrist, but that kind of care is restricted to children under 18 on a routine basis and adults on an emergency basis."

Other services offered by the clinic include environmental health surveys.

"This includes checking water sources for



purity in the rural areas and supervising the installation of septic tanks," said Daugherty.

Other treatments available include mental health, obstetrics-gynecology, and diabetes—one of the most serious Indian health problems.

"Diabetes is a very serious problem among Indians, and the problem is one rooted in culture," said Daugherty. "This problem goes hand in hand with the above average incidence of obesity in Indians."

"In the old days, the Indian people lived a feast and famine existence. When there was food, they ate well and were active enough to burn off the excess. And when times were lean, they lost weight.

"Of course now we have a steady supply

of food and we don't have that kind of active lifestyle anymore. But many still eat for the feast. This leaves conditions ripe for the development of diabetes," said Daugherty.

The Claremore Hospital

In addition to the clinic in Miami, Indians often look to Claremore Indian Hospital where those with more serious ailments can be helped. Claremore, located 50 miles west of Miami, provides more extensive services.

The hospital provides 50 beds and comprehensive care not available at the clinics.

According to Pete DeMonte, Jr., finance officer at the hospital, Claremore has an annual load of 120,000 patient visits. Patients are handled by a staff of 300 which includes 22 physicians, 94 nurses, and six pharmacists.

"Just about anything that doesn't require long-term hospitalization can be handled here," said DeMonte. "Comprehensive health care is the mission of this facility."

Services rendered include general medical and surgical, obstetrics and gynecology, and pediatric dental and medical care.

laboratory surpassing those found in private hospitals of comparable size.

"One thing unusual about our lab is we have our own blood bank, which is too common in a hospital of this size in the private sector.

"And another thing is that this lab is accredited by the College of American Pathologists. The College has probably the highest standards of any accrediting agency in the country," he said.

And all of this health care is provided to those people of Indian descent free of charge. These clinics, as well as those of the rest of the Indian Health Service, are funded through direct grants and Medicaid payments.

Private insurance is also accepted by those who carry it. However, this cannot be counted on to fund the operations of the facilities, especially since the recent collapse of the Oklahoma oil economy and the resultant upswing in unemployment.

DeMonte sees the immediate need of the Claremore Indian Hospital as one of improved funding and staffing.

"In 1983, the Reagan administration

"Diabetes is a very serious problem among Indians, and the problem is one rooted in culture. This problem goes hand in hand with the above average incidence of obesity in Indians."

—John Daugherty, Jr., Health Clinic administrator

"We offer full-term care for expectant mothers, and last year 986 babies were delivered on the OB-GYN ward," said DeMonte.

The hospital has 13 beds for OB-GYN patients, six for intensive care and cardiac care patients, 16 for general medical care patients, and 15 for those patients requiring short-term surgical care.

One of the points DeMonte stresses is the comprehensive care given at the hospital.

"We provide a little bit more than the Miami clinic can provide in the way of auxiliary services," he said. "We have orthopedic and urology clinics, an audiology clinic, and the kind of lab to support them."

According to DeMonte, the Claremore facility has a pathology and blood

went on a budget-cutting spree and the first programs to get cut was ours, about 20 percent," DeMonte said.

Daugherty said the latest rumors about the Indian Health Service are that privatization is the coming thing.

"There is speculation that the service will undergo some massive changes," Daugherty said, "in the direction of letting the tribes take over their own clinics and service and allowing civilian companies to take over administration of them."

Daugherty said the money the clinics and hospitals now receive is a "small portion" for the things that were taken away many years ago.



John Daugherty, Jr., administrator of Seneca-Cayuga Indian Health Clinic

Business manager—a Seneca-Cayuga—runs programs

by Sean Vanslyke
Staff Writer

Originally an eastern woodland tribe from the Algonquian family, the Miami tribe is now headquartered in northeast Oklahoma.

The tribe was initially called the "Dumamik" or "people of the peninsula" by other Indian tribes.

Under the Thomas-Rogers Oklahoma Indian Welfare Act of 1936, the Miami's tribal government was organized. The tribe is federally recognized with its offices located in Miami, Okla.



Curtis Crow: Oversees tribal programs

Although the Miamis are now situated in Miami, they have been moved several times. At the beginning of the 18th century, the Miamis lived in southern Indiana and northwest Ohio. After the American Revolution, a multitude of the Indian lands were taken by the whites who ventured into the Northwest Territory. This in turn began the Miami Confederacy, led by Chief Little Turtle, who led his forces to two victories over U.S. troops, but was defeated in northern Ohio—leading to many treaties between the tribe and the U.S. government.

Signing a treaty on November 28, 1840, the Miamis were moved to a reservation in Miami County, Kan. It took almost six years for them to make the journey to Kansas because of such problems as rough terrain and sickness within the tribe.

A 1867 treaty moved the Miamis to an area south of the reservation in Indian Territory, which is now Oklahoma. This region

included what are now the towns of Miami, Picher, and Commerce in Oklahoma, and some land in Kansas. Since then they have been in northeast Oklahoma.

"It is like living in a country within a country," said Floyd Leonard, who served as Miami chief from 1973-82.

"An Indian is a citizen of two different countries," he said. "The first, of course, is being a United States citizen, and then you are an Indian citizen."

The tribe is governed by a business committee that is elected by the supreme governing body of the Miami tribe called the Miami Council. The Council is comprised of all Miami Indians, males and females, at least 18 years old.

"An Indian has to follow the laws of both," Leonard said. "This can get very complicated when we get the local, state, federal, and the Indian governments involved in matters."

The Miami tribe has a constitution and by-laws which it must follow in electing officers and other areas concerning the tribe. Every three years the Council elects the officers of the tribe including the chief, second chief, secretary-treasurer, and two council members. They are elected by floor nominations and by a majority vote of the membership present.

"It is not a privilege, but it is an honor," said Chief Edward (Cy) Leonard. "It is a lot of hard work because of all the meetings and keeping an eye on things everyday."

The chief must preside at all meetings of the town and outside meetings (health boards, educational boards, etc.) He also acts as chairman of the business committee.

The business committee, which consists of the officers, meets once a month to discuss problems or issues that may come up during the month. The general council meets once a year on the Saturday after Labor Day.

The everyday business of the Miami tribe is conducted by the Miami Tribal Office and the tribe's business manager, Curtis L. Crow, a Seneca-Cayuga.

"Most of the tribal managers are not of the same tribe as they work for," said Cy Leonard.

"The business manager holds the tribe together because he is in charge of the everyday operations," said Floyd Leonard.

Crow is in charge of the various programs the tribal office offers to its tribe. For instance, the office is also known as the Senior



Citizens Center. There are many activities that go on during the week for Indians age 55 or over and their spouses including:

- a nutrition program
- arts and crafts
- beading classes
- recreation
- a blood pressure clinic
- legal aid.

"I oversee the programs and make sure they run smoothly and try to keep everyone happy," Crow said. "The center gives the Indians a chance to get out of their home and socialize with other Indians."

have. On the first Tuesday of each month, legal aid is provided for those senior citizens who need professional help.

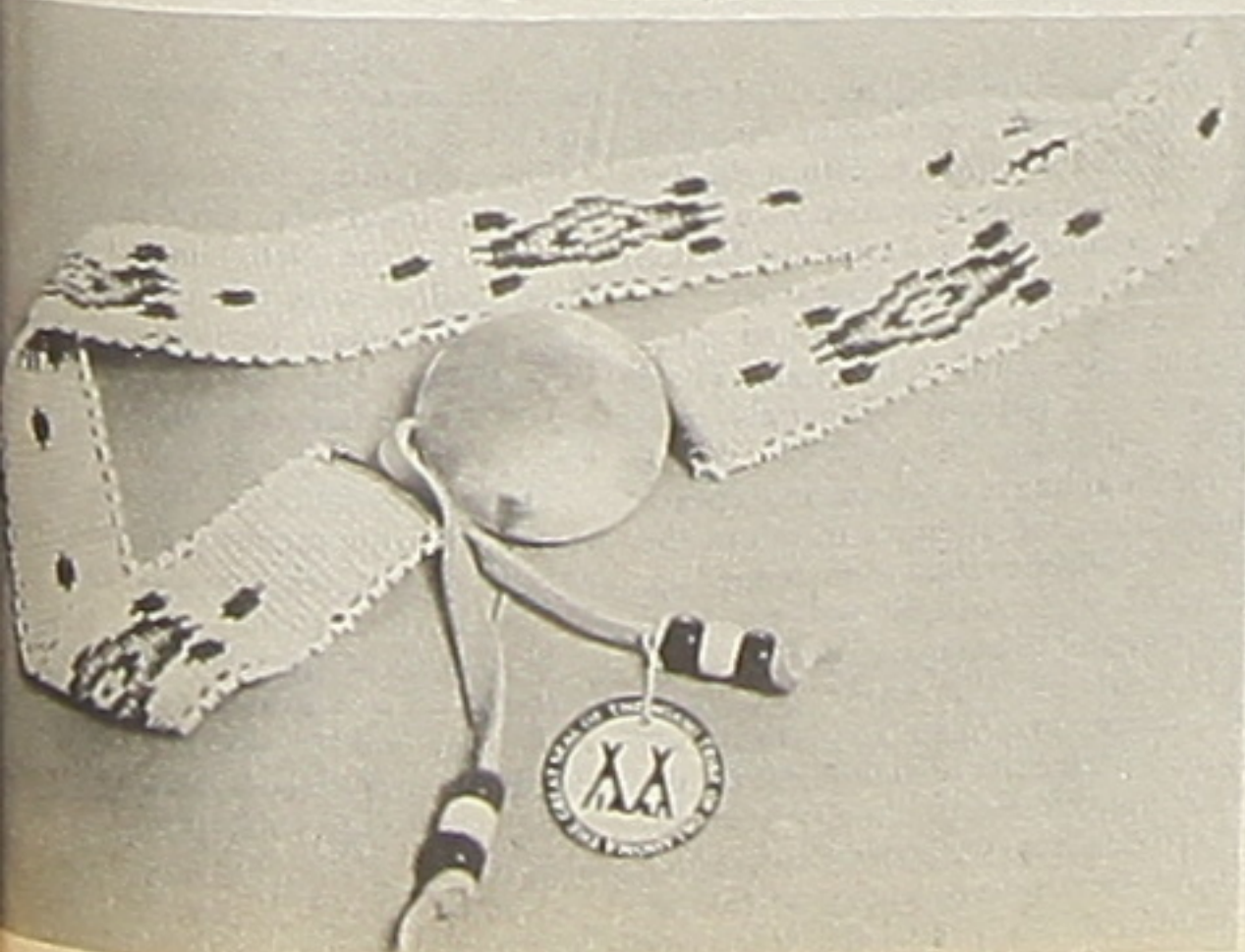
Similarly, the tribal office offers another program for its tribe called the Longhouse. The Longhouse is located about 10 miles northwest of Miami and about four miles west of Commerce.

Floyd Leonard said the name Longhouse originated when many Miami families lived together and called their homes "long-houses." These places also were used for social gatherings of the tribe.

Now, the Longhouse is used to serve those

"I oversee the programs and make sure they run smoothly and try to keep everyone happy. The center gives the Indians a chance to get out of their home and socialize with other Indians."

—Curtis Crow, business manager for Miami tribe



Crow said many people like to get out of their homes and into an atmosphere they can enjoy.

"Many are old grade school classmates and they meet their old friends," said Cy Leonard. "There are some, until they come out, who don't know their neighbors."

Added Crow, "Plus, coming out here gives them a good, free meal."

Sponsored by the USDA, the lunch program provides nutritious meals for those eligible to receive them. The program is open to several tribes.

"We feed as many as 245 a day down to 165 a day," said Crow. "They all are not Miami Indians. There are about 20 different tribes that come through the line."

Crow also oversees arts and crafts and recreation programs.

The center has a blood pressure clinic each day, which includes a community health representative who comes and checks the Indians and answers any questions they

Miami Indians who are not able to get into Miami, Okla., or who just prefer to go there. Lunch is served daily. Beading classes are taught, and sometimes the Longhouse is used for special events.

"We serve between 15 to 25 a day there," said Cy Leonard. "We have had some council meetings there."

The Miami tribe provides many services and programs to its members. However, there are many things that Crow would like to see change or happen.

"We are constantly trying to improve the housing program for the Indians," he said. "We are in the process of trying to get a grant to maybe get a small library put into the Center for the elderly's use."

With the addition of a library, the Miami Tribal Office will offer one more service to its people. Crow is optimistic about the future of the tribe.

Chief concerns himself with needs of all tribes

By Nancy Putman
Staff Writer

Looking out for the needs of all Indians in northeast Oklahoma, and not just his own tribe, is Bill Follis' main concern.

"The main thing to remember is that we are all Indian people," said Follis, chief of the Modoc Indians. "When I go to any Indian meeting, I'm looking out for all the tribes in the area."

"Employment, health, and education are the basic needs of our society, and this makes us no different than any other society."

Follis believes unemployment is the most pressing problem for Indians in the Miami, Okla., area.

"Basically, what I would like to do is create some enterprise to create jobs in the area," he said. "We are always looking into some business opportunities."

Preserving Modoc tribal heritage can also be a challenge for a small tribe totally adapted to its community, but Follis said the Modocs are "still a proud people."

About 160 Indians are currently enrolled in the Oklahoma branch of the Modoc tribe. According to Follis, there are probably 20 to 30 other Modocs not listed.

The Modoc office, which is in Miami, operates with a staff of only three volunteers and a \$6,400 budget received each year from the Bureau of Indian Affairs program. This money covers the cost of utilities and maintenance for their building.

The Modoc office was built four years ago with a community development grant from the federal government. The tribe allows other tribes or civic organizations in the area to use the building.

Follis said the tribe operates its own council "very loosely."

"We meet when there is something pertinent to discuss," he said. "This may only be one, three, or maybe six times a year, depending on what comes up."

The Modocs are the only tribe of the eight in northeast Oklahoma who do not have a

written constitution.

"We do not have a written constitution because we operate more traditionally," said Follis. "It is easier for a small tribe. Basically, a constitution is an adoption of the way the government insists you operate. My opinion is that is a good way to get in trouble. It creates a lot of confusion."

The Modoc chief is elected every four years. Follis has held that position since 1972.

"I'll probably hold the position until the day I pass away or give it up," he said.

Follis' main duties include maintaining law and order and seeing that contracts with the Bureau of Indian Affairs are signed. He also serves on the Indian health care advisory board along with other area chiefs.

Although there are another group of Modocs living in Oregon, the two branches do not keep in touch on a regular basis, and no reunions have been attempted.

"We do have contact with them periodically, but just for information," said Follis.

In contrast to the 2,000 square miles of territory the Modocs used to claim in northern California and southern Oregon, today the only tribal property of the Oklahoma Modocs is their office and a cemetery east of Miami.

The tribe also worked to restore a Friends denomination church which had originally been a schoolhouse.

Follis can remember as a young child hearing his grandparents speak in their native Modoc language, but today no one knows the language.

"The language was shamed out of society," he said. "That is why the language was lost. My grandfather and grandmother could speak it, but because it was not a social thing to do, it was not passed on."

"You lose a lot when you lose traditions such as this," Follis said. "When a group tries to keep up with a fast-moving society, that is how they lose it. And you don't appreciate it until it is gone."



Only one northeast Oklahoma tribe came from the west

Originally from California and Oregon, the Modoc Indians are the only one of the eight tribes of northeast Oklahoma to come from the west.

These Indians are closely related to the Klamath tribe. The two tribes have the same language, with only slight speech variations by each group. Today, no one speaks the language.

The word Modoc means "southerners." The Klamath tribe referred to the Modocs as "the people of the south."

During the later part of the 18th century, the first Europeans saw the Modocs. These people were Spanish missionaries of the Roman Catholic church in California. The Europeans introduced the horse to the Modocs in the 1830's. Within 20 years, the Modoc and Klamath tribes established trade with the non-Indians of the Pacific Northwest region as well as obtaining closer contact with the Indians from the Plains

region.

The Modoc economy was based on hunting and fishing. These Indians also used pond-lily seeds as a staple food. The women, who were highly developed weavers, made baskets, cradles, and mats.

By 1855, the Klamath reservation was opened in northwest California. A treaty signed in October 1854 provided more than one million acres for the Klamath reservation. In return, the two tribes were to give the United States all the land east of the Cascade Mountains in northeast California. The Modocs also agreed to move to the Klamath reservation in southern Oregon.

The Modocs, who were greatly outnumbered by the Klamath, were not protected by the United States. A peaceable settlement of the reservation was instead hostile and uneasy.

Captain Jack, a Modoc leader, took a band of the Modocs away from the reserva-

tion to the Lost River. They remained there, demanding a reservation separate from the Klamath. The attempts to return the Indians to the Klamath reservation were futile, and only resulted in the start of the Modoc War in 1872. Captain Jack, 80 warriors, and their families, in response, retreated to the rocks and caves south of Tule Lake. These lava beds were virtually impenetrable and further complicated the matter.

After the killing of a general and a peace commissioner, the attempts to return the Modocs to the reservation were stepped up. A group of more than 1,000 well-equipped troops was sent to campaign against Captain Jack and his followers.

The dissension of many of his own men coupled with the risk of annihilation if the war continued forced Captain Jack and his band of followers to surrender. Captain Jack and three warriors were court-martialed for the murder of the general and the peace

commissioner. They were eventually on Oct. 3, 1873.

The remaining members of the rebellious band were escorted by Fort McPherson, Neb. One hundred three Modocs were taken to the Qu Agency in Indian Territory in November 1873. In June 1874, a two-and-a-half square tract of land was purchased from Eastern Shawnee.

The two populations of the Modocs varied with the majority at the Klamath reservation in Oregon and as few as 100 in Indian Territory in 1905.

In 1890, 84 Modocs were living in Indian Territory. It was also reported that a school age child could read and write English. The students attended a school that had been erected on the tribe's Oklahoma land.

By Teresa Merrill
Staff Writer

Chief reflects on beliefs, traditions

Following his father's 25 years of leadership, George Captain reflects on traditions and beliefs of his elders.

Death, religion, and superstitions were sacred subjects to the Indians. Their beliefs were kept strong as they were passed from generation to generation. Lessons were learned as a youth grew to become a man. He, in turn, would teach many of these traditions to his children.

Ceremonies for the dead were practiced by the Shawnee in a festive manner to send the spirit on his journey free of bad spirits.

"When a Shawnee dies, he is to be taken to his home," said Captain, chief of the Eastern Shawnee. "On the third day, after the spirit leaves the body, the tribe has a feast."

The feast is prepared in the memory of the deceased. Whatever this person enjoyed during his lifetime was present at the feast.

"A loaded plate of favorite foods was set at a table for the spirit," said Captain. "From 11 p.m. to midnight, the tribe would sit in total darkness while the spirit ate. The plate is then taken to the cemetery and set at the head of the grave."

Prior to the ceremony, the home is



purified by smoking cedar to chase away evil spirits. The tribe's members had to cleanse themselves before attending the feast.

Before the coffin is finally buried, a hole must be made in the side. According to Captain, the hole is to allow the spirit to go to the happy hunting ground.

The tribe's religion was similar to Christianity in some ways.

"The Shawnee believed in the Great Spirit, but Jesus was a girl," said Captain.

But the "most important person" to the Shawnee was Grandma. Grandma lived on

the moon, with her six "sillies" (childlike men) and one grandson.

"Grandma has a great big basket, and when a spirit descends some will go to the happy hunting grounds, while others she will keep in her basket," said Captain.

When the world is destroyed by fire, those spirits that Grandma puts in the basket will come back to the earth to re-establish the Shawnee tribe. As noted in Shawnee history, Grandma knew about the flood that destroyed the earth.

"After the flood, she sent crawdads to drain the water from the earth," said Captain. "Then she sent back spirits from her basket."

Animals, medicine, and homes were subjects of superstitions among the Indians.

Animals were greatly respected because they provided clothing, food, and shelter. To kill an animal without reason was the same as killing a member of the tribe. The Shawnee believed that if they killed an owl, someone in the tribe was going to die.

Today, health services recognize medicine men as practicing physicians among tribe members, according to Captain.

Traditions still have significance among the tribe members and influence the way they live.

Once continually at war, tribe settles in Oklahoma in 1835

With a passion for freedom and independence, the Shawnee strived to live in the manner they had been accustomed to for years.

Once the leading tribe of South Carolina, Tennessee, Pennsylvania, and Ohio, the Shawnee are related to the central Algonquian family. "Shawnee" is derived from the name "Shawun," meaning "South;" and "Shawunogi," meaning "southerners."

In 1669, the Shawnee lived in two groups. Becoming neighbors with the Cherokee, the larger group moved into Tennessee. The other group stayed to the east of the mountains. The Cherokees invited the Shawnee to move south with them. Some settled in South Carolina while others went on to live in the Cumberland Basin in northern Tennessee and Kentucky.

In about 1690, the Shawnee of South Carolina began their 30-year-long journey to settle in Pennsylvania. Forty years later, the Shawnee of Tennessee built their home in Ohio after being run out of their lands.

Beginning in 1754, with the advent of the French and Indian War, for a period of 40 years the Shawnee in Ohio were the most hostile in that region. They were continually at war with the English.

In 1793 the Indians were defeated by the English. Two years later, in a treaty, the Indians gave up their homes in Ohio. The Shawnees were invited by the Delawares to move to the White River in Indiana.

Among the Indian leaders who did not sign the treaty was Tecumseh, a leader of the Shawnee. Tecumseh believed all lands belonged to all Indians and not to one particular tribe. He succeeded in organizing an alliance with the British.

In 1809 Tecumseh and his brother, known as the Prophet, led their warriors to Vincennes, Ind. This gathering was to argue that the exchange of land involving William Henry Harrison and some weak chiefs was invalid because all the Indians did not agree.

Even though Tecumseh had warned the Prophet not to agitate Harrison's forces, on Nov. 6, 1811, both sides fought until the downfall of the village. Tecumseh's Indian federation was destroyed.

In the war of 1812, Tecumseh's confederation was destroyed as the tribes chose sides. Tecumseh, who was killed in Canada, has been noted as "the most extraordinary Indian in United States history."

After Tecumseh's death, the tribes never recovered from their loss of the great leader or the loss of their land.

Moving in different directions, the Shawnee divided into three bands: Absentee band, Cherokee or Loyal band, and the Eastern band.

The Eastern band was a mixed group of Seneca and Shawnee who settled in Lewiston, Ohio. As stated in a treaty in 1831, the mixed band had to leave the land that now belonged to the United States.

After a long journey ending in 1835, 251 Seneca from Sandusky and 211 Senecas and Shawnees settled between the western boundary of Missouri and the eastern boundary of the Cherokee Nation.

Since 1835, the Eastern Shawnee tribe has inhabited this land. Currently, there are 1,420 members on the tribal roll. The base roll had a total membership of 280. Anybody who wishes membership to the roll must show direct descendency to someone on the base roll.

The tribe is governed by a constitution and by-laws, drawn up in 1937. A five-member business committee administers the tribal affairs, but major decisions are made by the general council. The chief of the Eastern Shawnee tribe is George J. Captain. Thomas A. Captain, his father, was chief for 25 years.

Located on the tribal complex at west Seneca, Okla., is the tribal office building, a community center building, and a bingo palace.



Paintings record history, lives of Oklahoma Indians

Miami artist sees a different Indian in his work

By Randy Bowman
Staff Writer

Someday they will be preserved history, but for now Charles Banks Wilson's paintings are depictions of the lives of the Oklahoma Indians.

"As far as history is concerned, what I have been recording is my time," he said. "And that will be history 50 years from now."

Painters such as Frederic Remington and George Catlin, who preserved the likenesses of Indians of their time, are destined to share their realm with another artist of that same stature—Wilson.

Wilson was born in 1918 in Springdale, Ark., but for the most part was reared in the Miami, Okla., area.

"My father was a painter," he said. "He owned a paint shop in Miami on a corner of Main Street."

Wilson said he liked to paint as a child and would paint on anything he could get his hands on.

"My father would get a big box of paints, and in the bottom would be large sheet of cardboard," he said. "I would take the sheet that was as tall as I was, lean it on the kitchen table, and paint a mural."

Wilson said he was not a good artist at first. He said in high school there was a student who was much better than he.

"I wondered if I'd ever be as good as he was," he said, "but he ended up driving a cab. Maybe it (painting) came too easy for him."

"It didn't come easy for me. It was very difficult, and I had to work harder than others. I think that's one of the reasons that I have had a little success."

He said in recent years, as well, he was not as good as some of the other well-known artists.

"I dedicated myself to my work," Wilson said. "I gave it all I had. In other words, I worked hard."

He said it was really an accident that he

started painting Indians—he never set out with that idea in mind.

His career in painting all started in his studio above his father's paint shop, where he still resides today.

"Across the street was the bus station," he said. "The bus took care of people going back into the settlements."

According to Wilson, rather than waiting for the bus in the waiting room of the station, the passengers enjoyed coming over to his studio.

"My hall would be full of Indians rebraiding their hair, refilling their pipes, or just visiting," said Wilson. "I found them to be very interesting people, and besides that it was the Depression and they would pose for 25 cents an hour."

He said what really had a great impact on his career was that these Indians did not care whether he had good color, good lines, or strong form. All they were interested in was "did he make a good likeness," and could they recognize themselves.

"So from the beginning they influenced me toward 'good likeness,'" said Wilson, "and that put me at a good stand for later works."

He said it is true "to some extent" works are preserving history.

"I never thought of the Indians as being history," said Wilson. "I always thought of them as being 'right now'—a part of my lifetime."

According to Wilson, this is one of the unique parts of his career as far as Indians are concerned. There are many people who draw historical Indians chasing buffalo across the plains into the sunset, but Wilson sees a different Indian in his paintings.

He said his works really were not popular because he would paint Indians doing a war dance and in the background have a ferris wheel or something out of the ordinary "expected Indian tradition."

"I drew what I saw," Wilson said. "People wanted the Indians to be a nostalgic keepsake. They didn't want to see an Indian

working on his car."

He said in the beginning he saw the Indians wearing feathers and bells and staging an ancient war dance, but somewhere along the line he began to notice the people in the audience.

"I started watching the people behind me instead of the dancers," Wilson said, "and they were more interesting than the people putting on the show. That's where my viewpoint on Indians changed."

Some of his pictures show Indians pumping water, eating dinner, playing in a band, telling stories to their grandchildren, or sharpening a plow.

"They are not the usual things people associate with Indians," he said. "But it was the Indian that I knew."

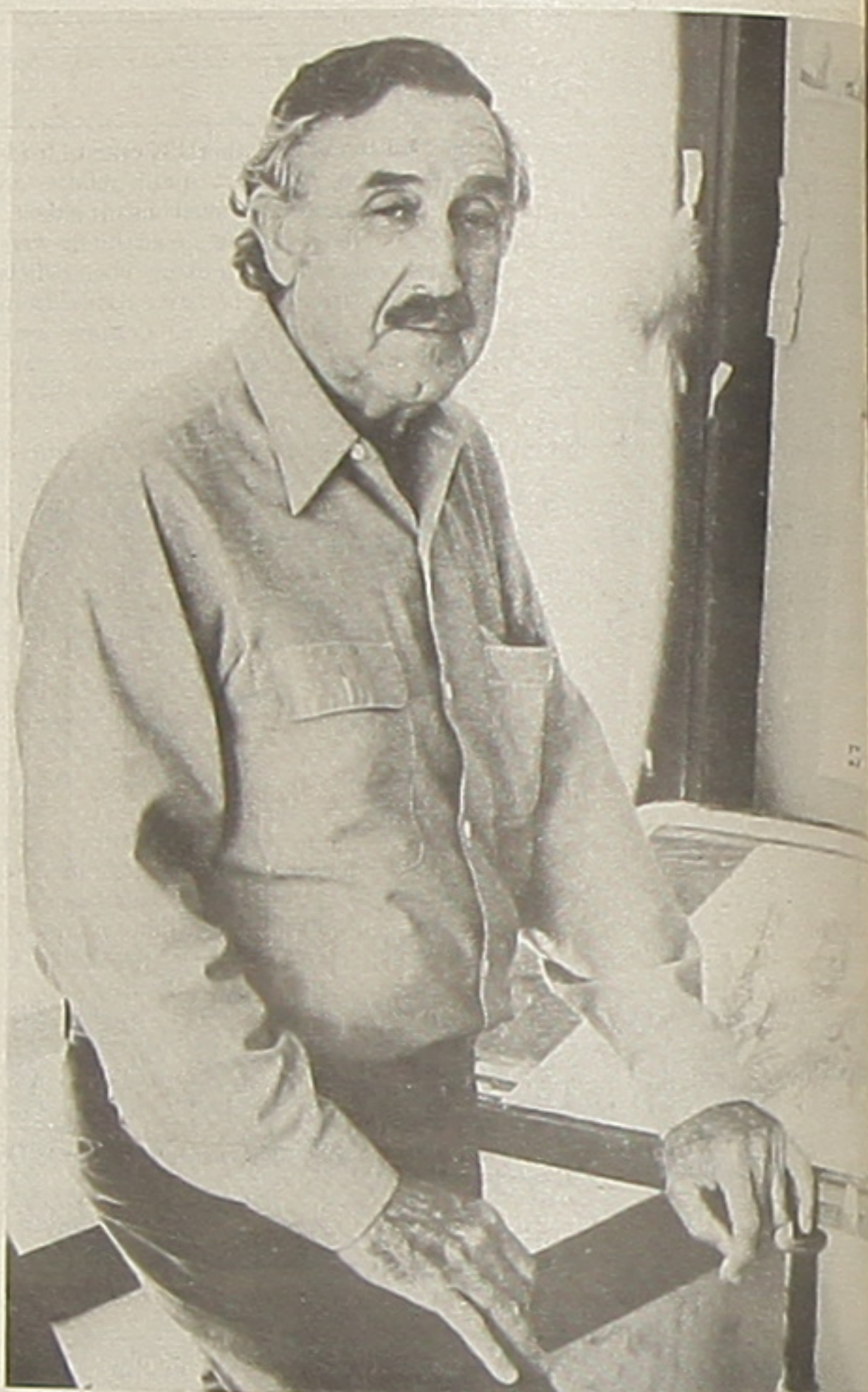
"I was at the right place at the right time to participate in the transition from a primitive people into modern society. I thought: Gosh, what a unique thing to watch."

Other societies have made the same transition but none as fast as the Americans Indians have been made to do so.

"The (American) Indian had to make that transformation in 20 years," said Wilson. "We just picked him out of the blanket and put him in a car."

According to Wilson, the tribes which came here gave the people of this region a great vantage point of this transition. He said he did not think the people realized what was going on.

"I think they were critical of the Indian," Wilson said, "but I was there as an artist to draw it (the transition)."



"I would tell Indian boys to stop doing what their grandfathers told them and draw their life as it is now. They find it interesting, but I did, and that's I drew."

Wilson went from high school to the Art Institute of Chicago, where he graduated.

Early in his career, he wanted to be a cartoonist. He lived and worked in New York City for two and one-half years before coming to northeast Oklahoma.

"I returned to Miami during the 1930s and began teaching at Northeastern A&M," he said.

Wilson established an art department there in the late 1940's and went on for 15 years.

"Then Thomas Hart Benton became interested in me," said Wilson. "I shouldn't teach, I should just paint."

Wilson said he was worried about the "grave train," that steady loss of teaching provided.

"Then after I quit teaching and painting my career really took off."

Besides painter and printmaker, he also been both author and editor, and an illustrator of books.

"One thing I did in books was to tell whatever the story was and in the end went along with the setting of the story."

Wilson's latest completed book, *The Search for the Purebloods*, does in his words and with illustrations pure-blood Indians.

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According to Wilson, many people do not realize what a true pure-blood Indian really is. First, there are full-blooded Indians who are true Indians but whose parents are from different tribes. On the other hand, a pure-blood's parents and grandparents are all from the same tribe and bloodline.

Said Wilson, "There are very few of them left."

He considers the drawings of the pure-bloods his most important Indian work.

Wilson has been known for many great works of art, but as important as any to him are his landscapes of Oklahoma.

"What I really enjoy as much as anything is putting a pack on my back and getting a rope to let myself down the bank of a creek and just sit and draw it," he said.

Wilson feels these paintings, at least as works of art, are the most important of all his works.

"I have no real hobbies except for my painting," he said. "The fact that I get paid

for it is remarkable, considering how much I enjoy it."

For the most part Wilson has been involved in art all his life, from painting on sheets of cardboard as a child, to his giant murals in the rotunda at the state capitol in Oklahoma City. Art is his life and his life is painted in his art.

"I've always felt an artist should paint things in his own time, things he knows," said Wilson.

He has done this tirelessly all his life. He said he hates to leave his work at night and is anxious to return to it the next morning.

During his career he has created many images, but his own life paints the most vivid picture—one of a man's great dedication and love for his work.

From his little corner on Main Street he has preserved the history of the present for the generations of the future.

"I painted what I saw," said Wilson. "I just painted my little corner of the world."

Murals on display at state capitol

Honored by major museums and galleries containing permanent collections of his artwork, Charles Banks Wilson has many of his works on display throughout the nation.

These collections have found homes in Washington's Library of Congress, the New York Metropolitan, and the Smithsonian Institute.

During his career he has been everything from an author to an illustrator, a printmaker to a painter. He has illustrations in an Oklahoma history textbook and has sketched out the story lines of classical books like *Treasure Island* and *The Mustangs*.

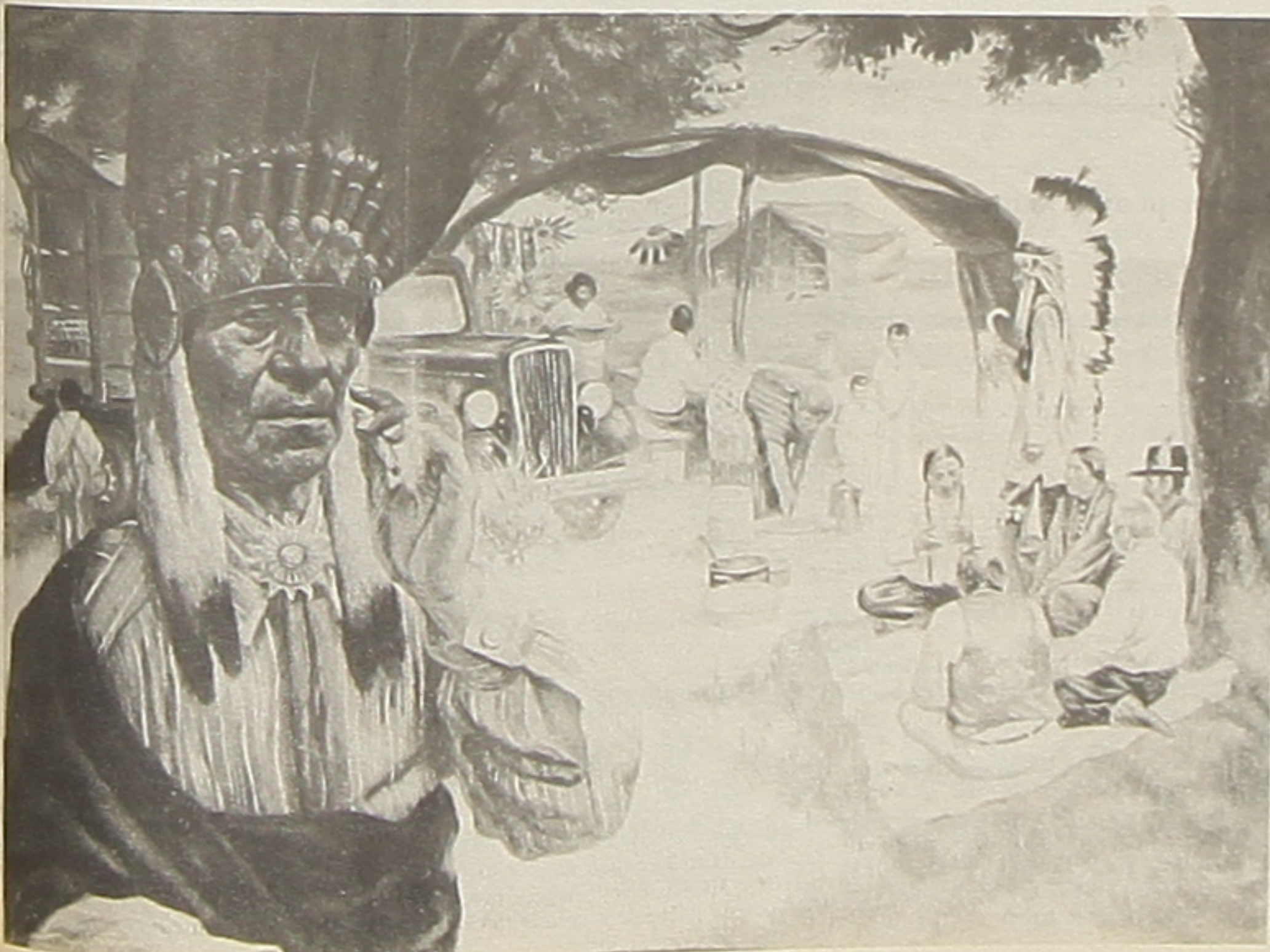
Wilson spent four years in completing four murals totaling 110 feet in length, which are now displayed in the rotunda of the Oklahoma state capitol. The murals

show the state's discovery, its frontier trade, and the Indian migration and settlement.

Among his other famous works is a portrait of U.S. House Speaker Carl Albert. This painting was the first to hang in the National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C., before it was permanently placed on display in the U.S. Capitol Speakers' Gallery.

Other portraits include U.S. Sen. Robert Kerr, Sequoyah, athlete Jim Thorpe, and four mural-sized paintings of Will Rogers. These last four works can be viewed when visiting the state capitol rotunda.

He was a recipient of the Western Heritage Award from the Cowboy Hall of Fame and is a member of the Oklahoma Hall of Fame.



Photos by
Sean Vanslyke

Council aids low-income Indians

By John Ford
Staff Writer

Because a large number of American Indians are currently living under poverty conditions, the Cornerstone Inter-Tribal Council was formed in 1983 to serve the needs of Indians in the Joplin area.

According to Bob Stark, treasurer for the Council, 43 percent of native Americans are below federal income poverty guidelines.

"We started out, basically, to educate and help low income Indian people," he said.

This help comes in many forms. For instance, if persons believe they are of native American ancestry, the Council can help them in their search for their ancestors by checking the tribal rolls.

"If we find a name of an ancestor, we ask that (the party searching for ancestors) verify their ancestry with birth and death records," said Stark. "Most tribes have census cards which lists not only tribal members, but also family members at the time of enrollment."

Persons must prove they are of Indian descent in order to receive a Certificate of Degree of Indian Blood (CDIB) which, in part, makes them eligible to receive various benefits. These benefits include housing assistance and admittance to Indian health clinics such as the one in Miami, Okla.



These benefits were guaranteed to the Indians by several United States treaties in exchange for tribal land.

"The U.S. government determines who can use these benefits," said Stark.

In addition to the many benefits which Cornerstone helps people obtain, the group tries to teach tribal tradition. Although persons may happen to be Indians, they may

not know the many customs and traditions of their particular tribe.

Another service of the Council is the taking of a census to determine the economic needs of Indians in the four-state area.

"The federal government used our census to verify the fact that there are a sufficient number of Indians that need food," Stark said.

Part of what Cornerstone does is distribute food to needy Indians.

"The government allows food programs to extend around 50 miles outside reservation limits," said Stark.

Cornerstone has many goals on how to help native Americans in the future, including trying to bring housing to southwest Missouri and establishing an Indian health clinic on the Missouri side of the state line.

Membership in the Cornerstone Council does not depend upon degree of Indian blood, but to be eligible for a seat on the board of directors, a person must prove or she is of Indian descent and hold a CDIB card.

"Any non-Indian who is interested in joining," said Stark. "To my knowledge, we never refused anyone for membership."

"Basically, they (non-Indians) fill out an application for membership," Stark said. "Applicants will then need two character references."

Food distribution program serves eligible Indians in four-state area

By Sean Vanslyke
Staff Writer

Although the United States Department of Agriculture is known better for helping farmers and placing grades on meat, the department also helps the native American.

Through the USDA, the people of Indian descent are able to receive a variety of foods in order to provide nutritional care. The USDA, in conjunction with the Inter-Tribal Council, INC., of Miami, Okla., sponsors a food distribution program.

Blood) card. The person must also show verification of income or proof of unemployment and a receipt to prove residency.

The food distribution program is an option equal to food stamps, but persons using the program are not able to be on the food stamp program or they will be disqualified.

"It is a program designed to help those Indians that live on a rural route," said Johnson.

Miami, Carthage, Joplin, and Parsons, Kan., are all limited to the number of commodities they receive. The USDA regulates

"We are here to help the Indian people and serve them."

—Patricia Johnson, certification supervisor

"We are here to help the Indian people and serve them," said Patricia Johnson, certification supervisor.

The program distributes commodities to eligible Indians in many places including Barton, Newton, McDonald, and Jasper counties in Missouri, and Labette and Cherokee counties in Kansas. The ITC offers a monthly pick-up in Miami.

"There are approximately 3,000 qualified persons that we serve in Miami and on both sides of the toll gates each month," said Glen D. Wiford, controller of ITC.

Wiford said the food is provided by the USDA and that it orders the amount needed. He also said that in the event of additional, qualified persons needing food, the office has no problem obtaining the extra amount.

There are several guidelines persons must meet before they are able to receive the free commodities. In order to be eligible, an adult member of a household must present a CDIB (Certificate of Degree of Indian

distribution to a city with a population of 10,000 or more.

Persons must meet income guidelines set up by the USDA. These guidelines are determined by the size of the household.

Those qualified are eligible to receive 70 pounds per person in each household per month. Some foods available are canned vegetables, dry beans, peanut butter, fruit and juices, flour, cornmeal, rice, milk, cheese, butter, syrup and honey, canned meats, and powdered eggs.

For those people who are unable to visit the distribution center in Miami, foods are distributed in Lamar, Oswego, Kan., and other cities.

With help from the USDA the ITC is able to provide this service as well as many others.

The program is provided all year to those eligible. Persons may contact the Inter-Tribal Council, Inc., at 918-542-4486 between the hours of 8 a.m. and 4 p.m.



Participants pick up their goods which they qualified for from the Inter-Tribal Council located in Miami, Okla. The food program is sponsored partly by the USDA and the ITC. The persons must follow certain rules and regulations but also qualify before being able to receive the commodities.